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ABSTRACT

The job satisfaction of 35 developmentally disabled workers (17 to 38 years old) placed into competitive employment over a 2.5 year period was assessed. The Job Satisfaction Survey which measures satisfaction with the job itself, with the work group, with the company, and with the pay and job status, was administered orally in structured interview sessions. Ss expressed a high degree of satisfaction with their jobs. A significant difference in satisfaction with pay existed between full-time and part-time workers, but no significant differences were evident (among subgroups categorized by age, sex, disability, work experience, and service/semi-skilled positions) regarding satisfaction with the work, the work groups, or the company. (CL)

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JOB SATISFACTION OF DEVELOPMENTALLY [SABLED WORKERS IN COMPETITIVE EMPLOYMNT

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JOB SATISFACTION OF DEVELOPMENTALLY DISABLED WORKERS IN COMPETITIVE EMPLOYMENT

Until recently few persons with mild and moderate developmental disabilities had been placed in full-time competitive employment. These individuals were offered little chance to demonstrate their vocational potential. Routinely the mentally retarded were referred to sheltered workshops, which became their terminal placement (Wehman, 1981). According to a U. S. Department of Labor report (1977), only 12% of regular workshop clients and 7% of work activities center clients are placed into competitive employment. The current emphasis on normalization (Nirje, 1969) has encouraged many service delivery models to address the right of mentally retarded persons to work. As more developmentally disabled adults enter competitive employment, researchers are exploring factors that affect their employment (Landy, 1979; Levy, 1978; Townsend, 1974; Domino, 1972; Robinson, 1971; and Sali, 1971).

Any employee forms attitudes about his/her work which affect performance. Satisfaction on the job is one of these attitudes. Employers have long recognized that satisfied employees perform better, are absent less and are less likely to quit their jobs (Reitz, 1977). Much research has been conducted in an attempt to define, measure, and explain job satisfaction (Brayfield, 1951; Cherrington, 1971; Brief, 1975; Smith, 1969; Porter, 1965; U. S. Department of Labor, 1974). Little of this research, however, has analyzed specifically the job satisfaction of workers who are developmentally disabled. Talkington (1975) compared expressed job satisfaction and actual work performance of 45 retarded females and found that job satisfaction is "significantly related to job performance for retarded workers" (Talkington, 1975: 19). Rosen (1970) compared employment satisfaction of previously-

institutionalized mentally retarded workers to that of non-retarded workers. His findings revealed that the greatest job dissatisfaction for both groups was inadequate compensation and the low status of their positions. Rosen's findings are consistent with the report of the U. S. Department of Labor (1974) indicating that non-handicapped persons holding lower status jobs are less satisfied than persons holding professional, technical, and managerial positions.

Research concerning developmentally disabled workers and their satisfaction with specific work factors is needed, for example, on the level of satisfaction of these adults with their jobs, work groups, companies, pay, and job status, or whether a significant difference exists in the degree of satisfaction among age groups, males and females, disability groups, service versus semi-skilled workers, or part-time versus full-time workers.

The purpose of the research presented here is to assess the job satisfaction of 100 developmentally disabled workers placed into competitive employment over a 2-1/2 year period according to a service delivery model in northeast Arkansas known as the Focus Supportive Work Program and to determine if any significant difference exists among groups.

Methodology

The subjects surveyed in this study were selected from an available population of clients placed in competitive employment through the Supportive Work Program. The sample of 35 participants included 28 males and 7 females, aged 17 to 38. The subjects' I.Q.'s ranged from 45 to 84. Of this group, 36% also had secondary disabilities. 31% had no prior work experience, 26% had prior work experience , and 43% had only sheltered workshop experience. 77% were working in service positions while 23% were employed in semi-skilled

positions. 65% worked full time (30 or more hours per week) and 35% worked part-time (29-15 hours per week). All subjects had been employed at least six months prior to the time of the survey, and some had been employed eighteen months.

Instrument

The Job Satisfaction Survey utilized in the study consists of 30 items selected from the 78 items in the Science Research Associates Attitude Survey (see Appendix I). Because the survey was administered orally in structured interview sessions, the smaller survey was more feasible. Of the 30 items in the survey, 9 related to satisfaction with job itself; 7 to the work group; 6 to the company; and 5 to the pay and job status. Agree and disagree response categories for each item were rated with a 2 for positive response and a 1 for a negative response.

The reliability coefficients (Kuder-Richardson Formula 20) for the survey instrument ranged from .60 to .84 with a median of .68 on the job-related attitude scales. Validity criterion of scores on the inventory were explored based on the employee's remarks in the interview, the observer's opinion of the level of morale, and the employee's behavior on the job (Ash, 1954; Wherry, 1958). No reliability statistics are available for the shortened form of the survey.

A field test of the survey was conducted among sheltered workshop employees who were comparable to the subjects of the study in age, I.Q., work experience, etc. During the field test two facts became apparent: (1) the survey needed to be shortened, and (2) the survey items (e.g., "employment benefit program") required clarification before the subject could respond. The field test indicated the need for oral administration of the survey in one-on-

one interview sessions.

Statistical Analysis

A number of statistical operations were performed on each of the four factors of job satisfaction cross-tabulated by sub-groups of the research population. Frequency distributions, chi-square, Kendall's Tau, and Gamma tests of significance were computed. Significance was arbitrarily set at the .05 level.

Findings

A. Satisfaction with Work Itself

All groups expressed a high level of satisfaction with the work itself. No significant differences existed between groups:

Sex--Gamma .2137
Age--Gamma .0226
Disability--Gamma .0902
Work Experience--Gamma .0857
Service/Semi-Skilled--Gamma .3253
Full-Time/Part-Time--Gamma .3513

B. Satisfaction with Work Group

Satisfaction with the work group was very high among all sub-groups with no significant differences evident:

Sex--Gamma .2173
Age--Gamma .0620
Disability--Gamma .2973
Work Experience--Gamma .0251
Service/Semi-Skilled--Gamma .5671
Full-Time/Part-Time--Gamma .0571

C. Satisfaction with Company

Respondents expressed high levels of satisfaction with the companies for which they work. No significant differences were evident between the sub-groups in the area of satisfaction with the company:

Sex--Gamma .2800
Age--Gamma .2280
Disability--Gamma .4264
Work Experience--Gamma .1638
Service/Semi-Skilled--Gamma .2381
Full-Time/Part-Time--Gamma .0666

D. Satisfaction with Pay and Job Status

Satisfaction with pay and job status was less positive than the other categories of job satisfaction although respondents were positive. A significant difference exists on pay satisfaction between those respondants working full-time and those employed part-time. Chi-square analysis revealed a significance of .0569. The part-time workers expressed less satisfaction with their pay.

Conclusions

The developmentally disabled adults in this study expressed a high degree of satisfaction with their jobs. No significant differences between the sub-groups of respondents were evident in the sub-categories of satisfaction with the work itself, the work groups, or with the company. A significant difference in satisfaction with pay existed between full-time and part-time workers, with the part-time workers expressing less satisfaction. The findings of this study are not meant to be generalized to the total population of developmentally disabled workers who are competitively employed. The present study is exploratory in nature, and its scope reaches only the population of respondents herein.

Further research is needed in the area of the job satisfaction of developmentally disabled adults who are competitively employed. One area of research should compare the developmentally disabled adult worker with a non-

handicapped co-worker in all areas of job satisfaction. Another area of research should examine employer evaluations of workers who are developmentally disabled and the worker's expressed job satisfaction to determine if expressed job satisfaction is consistent with employer perceptions of the worker's job performance.

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ABSTRACT

TITLE: Job Satisfaction of Developmentally Disabled Workers in Competitive Employment

Supported work programs have made competitive work possible for adults with developmental disabilities. Their job satisfaction in competitive employment is the subject of this exploratory research. Thirty-five subjects were interviewed on the 30-item Science Research Associates Attitude Survey. All subjects had been employed from 6 to 18 months at the time they were surveyed. Factors of job satisfaction included: the work itself, the work group, the company, and pay and job status. Controlling variables included sex, age, disability, prior work experience, job duration (part-time, full-time), and type position held (service, industrial, skilled, semi-skilled). Statistical analysis indicated that subjects were highly satisfied with their jobs. Chi-square analysis identified significant differences between satisfaction of the subject groups with pay and employee benefits.

APPENDIX I

SECTION ONE: JOB SATISFACTION

Circle One

1. Disagree 2. Agree	1. The hours of work here are O.K.
1. Agree 2. Disagree	2. In my opinion, the pay here is lower than in other companies.
1. Disagree 2. Agree	3. The people I work with help each other out when someone falls behind or gets in a tight spot.
1. Agree 2. Disagree	4. My boss is always breathing down our necks, he watches us too closely.
1. Disagree 2. Agree	5. My boss gives us credit and praise for work well done.
1. Disagree 2. Agree	6. If I have a complaint to make, I feel free to talk to someone up-the-line.
1. Disagree 2. Agree	7. I was properly trained for my job.
1. Disagree 2. Agree	8. My boss sees that we have the things we need to do our jobs.
1. Agree 2. Disagree	9. I am often bothered by sudden speed-ups or unexpected slack periods in my work.
1. Disagree 2. Agree	10. There are plenty of good jobs here for those who want to get ahead.
1. Agree 2. Disagree	11. I often feel worn out and tired on my job.

1. Disagree
2. Agree

12. I am paid fairly compared with other employees.

---

1. Disagree
2. Agree

13. The people I work with get along well together.

---

1. Disagree
2. Agree

14. My boss has always been fair in his dealings with me.

---

1. Disagree
2. Agree

15. My boss gets employees to work together as a team.

---

1. Disagree
2. Agree

16. I have confidence in the fairness and honesty of management.

---

1. Disagree
2. Agree

17. I can be sure of my job as long as I do good work.

---

1. Disagree
2. Agree

18. My boss lets us know exactly what is expected of us.

---

1. Disagree
2. Agree

19. I really feel part of this organization.

---

1. Agree
2. Disagree

20. My job is often dull and monotonous.

---

1. Agree
2. Disagree

21. There is too much pressure on my job.

---

1. Disagree
2. Agree

22. I have the right equipment to do my work.

---

1. Disagree
2. Agree

23. My pay is enough to live on comfortably.

---

1. Disagree
2. Agree

24. The people I work with are very friendly.

---

1. Disagree
2. Agree

25. I can learn a great deal on my present job

---

1. Agree
2. Disagree

26. Everybody in this organization tries to boss us around.

---

1. Agree
2. Disagree

27. I am very much underpaid for the work that I do.

---

1. Disagree
2. Agree

28. I am really doing something worthwhile in my job.

---

1. Disagree
2. Agree

29. I am proud to work for this company.

---

1. Disagree
2. Agree

30. The company's employee benefit program (Health and Life insurance, sick pay, vacation, etc.) is O.K.

SECTION TWO: LIFE SATISFACTION

1. Not Very Satisfying
2. Pretty Satisfying
3. Completely Satisfying

31. In general, how satisfying do you find the way you are spending your life these days? Would you call it completely satisfying, pretty satisfying, or not very satisfying?

SECTION THREE: HAPPINESS

1. Not Too Happy
2. Pretty Happy
3. Very Happy

32. Taking all things together, how would you say things are these days--would you say you are very happy, pretty happy, or not too happy?